

## **GOLF CLUB ACCESSORY**

## 2 Related Application

3 This invention is a divisional of U.S. Application No.  
4 09/905,302 filed July 16, 2001, the contents of which is  
5 incorporated herein, no new matter is added.

7 Field of the Invention

8 This invention relates generally to golf and more  
9 particularly to a golf club accessory for use in the retrieval  
10 of a golf tee.

## 12 Background Information

13           The game of golf is an immensely popular sporting activity  
14        played throughout the world. In the most simplified form, the  
15        game is played on a golf course consisting of eighteen holes,  
16        each hole having a tee, a fairway, and a putting green. A skill  
17        is required by avoiding sand traps, water hazards, and roughs.  
18        The premise of the game requires ball control for purposes of  
19        completing a round of golf in as few strokes as possible. The  
20        game of golf employs the use of various clubs that provide the  
21        golfer with tools to control distances that a golf ball is  
22        advanced. For instance, when a golfer puts a ball into play for  
23        a particular hole, the golfer must strike the ball from a tee  
24        surface in hopes of placing the ball within a hole located on a  
25        distant putting green. If the length of distance between the tee  
26        surface and the putting green is long, the golfer may typically

1 employ a club historically called a "wood" or "driver" to  
2 project the ball as far as possible toward the putting green.  
3 The rules of the game allow the golfer to place the golf ball  
4 upon a golf ball tee for this initial tee off. The golf ball  
5 tee may be used on each of the eighteen holes.

6 Unique to the game of golf is the ability for any age  
7 individual to compete and enjoy the game. The use of a handicap  
8 system allows an individual, despite their ability and skill to  
9 compete with fellow golfers. In light of this, elderly persons  
10 and those with minor physical ailments can fully enjoy and  
11 compete in the game, even if they have difficulty in bending  
12 over which is a necessary function for placement and retrieval  
13 of golf balls and golf tees. For instance, once a golfer has  
14 hit a golf ball from the tee, the need to retrieve the golf ball  
15 tee is required. However, many individuals are too lazy or  
16 simply choose not to bend over due to the inconvenience or  
17 physical limitations. The result is discarded golf tees laying  
18 on the tee playing surface. This leaves an unsightly playing  
19 surface and can be hazardous to maintenance people and  
20 equipment, for example mowers which are employed to provide a  
21 short grass on the tee surface.

22 If an aluminum tee is used, the discarded tee can actually  
23 damage reel mowers. Typically the tees are very inexpensive and  
24 if the tee is not in a convenient position to pick-up, the tee  
25 is abandoned by the golfer. Further, very seldom will a golfer  
26 pick-up a spent tee left by another golfer.

1       For these reasons there exists a need for a low cost device  
2       that will assist a golfer in the retrieval of a golf tee, and  
3       make it so convenient that they may pick up other discarded  
4       tees.

5

6       DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIOR ART

7       U.S. patent number 5,011,150 discloses a golf tee retrieval  
8       system consisting of a hook and loop system coupled to a golf  
9       tee and the end of the shaft of a golfclub. The inventor  
10      employs the hook and loop system by placing a piece of the  
11      "Velcro" on the tee and the mating portion on the end of the  
12      golfclub shaft. A golfer would utilize the golfclub in its  
13      ordinary and conventional manner and after striking a golf ball  
14      would invert the golfclub and press the hook and loop system  
15      together for purposes of retrieving the golf tee. A  
16      disadvantage to such a system is that the golf tee is typically  
17      laying on its side and thus the placement of the hook and loop  
18      on the end of a tee makes it impractical for ball retrieval. In  
19      addition, placing of the material on top of the tee can offset  
20      the golf ball wherein even a wind could cause the golf ball to  
21      become dislodged from the tee.

22      U.S. patent number 2,154,989 discloses an attachment for  
23      golf clubs that sits on the end of a golf club shaft and employs  
24      semi-circular hoops for purposes for engaging the golf tee.  
25      This device requires the golfer to manipulate the tee through  
26      the holes requiring a developed skill in order to use the golf

1 tee retrieval.

2 U.S. patent number 5,672,121 discloses an apparatus for  
3 positioning and retrieving of golf balls and tees. This  
4 invention employs a separate apparatus that is used independent  
5 of a golf club thus requiring additional items to be placed in  
6 a golf club bag. In addition, this device uses an elaborate  
7 retrieval having mechanical parts that can be easily damaged by  
8 placement in a bag especially should the bags be filled with  
9 graphite shafts easily scratched or otherwise damaged when  
10 unrelated items are placed into the golfbag.

11 U.S. patent number 4,951,947 discloses yet another golf  
12 ball teeing device which further allows for retrieval of a golf  
13 tee if the golf tee remains in an upright position. This item  
14 would be impractical for most golfers that drive a golf ball  
15 because the tee is laying in a horizontal position. In addition  
16 this requires the use of a separate utensil again placed within  
17 a golf bag.

18

19 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

20 The present invention satisfies this need through provision  
21 of a golf club accessory device that is used in combination with  
22 a golf club. The device has a base with a top side surface and  
23 a bottom side surface. The top side surface has at least two  
24 spaced-apart flexible members used for capturing a golf tee.  
25 The base is secured to the handle end of a golf club shaft  
26 whereby the golf club can be used for its intended purpose of

1 striking a golf ball from a tee. The accessory device or  
2 flexible fingers may be molded, mounted or otherwise  
3 incorporated into the grip of the golf club. The flexible  
4 members are used to retrieve a golf ball tee by inverting the  
5 golf club shaft, allowing the shaft to operate as an arm  
6 extension allowing tee retrieval without the need for the golfer  
7 to bend over.

8 It is an objective of the invention to provide a golf tee  
9 retrieval device that is easy and economical to use in  
10 conjunction with a conventional golf club which will facilitate  
11 the retrieval of a golf tee when laying on the ground.

12 Another objective of the instant invention is to disclose  
13 a golf club accessory that is inexpensive and can be readily  
14 discarded after excessive use.

15 Still another objective of the instant invention is to make  
16 the retrieval of golf tees more simplistic whereby an individual  
17 would be more likely to pick up golf tees discarded by other  
18 golfers.

19 Still another objective of the instant invention is to  
20 provide a golf club accessory that does not inhibit the use of  
21 a golf club in its ordinary and conventional manner and further  
22 provides a spacer when placed in a golf bag to prevent moisture  
23 or other debris from attaching to the end of the golf club grip  
24 thereby preventing the golfer's hand from touching items that  
25 may have otherwise contacted the tip of the handgrip.

26 Other objectives and advantages of this invention will

1 become apparent from the following description taken in  
2 conjunction with the accompanying drawings wherein are set  
3 forth, by way of illustration and example, certain embodiments  
4 of this invention. The drawings constitute a part of this  
5 specification and include exemplary embodiments of the present  
6 invention and illustrate various objects and features thereof.

7

8 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

9 FIG. 1 is a perspective of a golf club handle and tee  
10 retriever of this invention grasping a tee shown in phantom  
11 lines;

12 FIG. 2A is a perspective of the tee retriever showing  
13 a spike fastening embodiment;

14 FIG. 2B is a top view of the tee retriever of  
15 this invention;

16 FIG. 3A is a perspective of a golf club grip and integral  
17 tee retriever;

18 FIG. 3B is a cross-section of a tee retriever showing a  
19 tubular fastening embodiment;

20 FIG. 4 is a perspective of the tee retriever showing a  
21 "Velcro" fastening embodiment;

22 FIG. 5 is a perspective of the tee retriever showing  
23 a screw fastening embodiment;

24 FIG. 6 is a side view of another embodiment of the fingers  
25 of this invention;

26 FIG. 7 is a side view of another embodiment of the finger

1 of this invention;

2 FIG. 8 is a side view of another embodiment of the fingers  
3 of this invention;

4 FIG. 9 is a side view of another embodiment of the fingers  
5 of this invention;

6 FIG. 10 is a side view of another embodiment of  
7 the fingers of this invention; and

8 FIG. 11 is a side view of another embodiment of  
9 the fingers of this invention.

10

11 DETAILED DESCRIPTION

12 Golf clubs are made with an elongated flexible shaft of  
13 steel, fiberglass, graphite or other material. At one end of  
14 the shaft a head is attached. The head which may be of steel,  
15 titanium or other exotic combinations of materials, is the  
16 component of the golf club that strikes the golf ball. At the  
17 other end of the shaft is the handle which is grasped in the  
18 hands of the golfer. This handle end of the club usually has an  
19 outer grip made of some material, e. g. leather or rubber,  
20 which facilitates the intimate contact between the golfer's  
21 hands and the club.

22 The tee retriever 10, or fingers 25, shown in FIG. 1, may  
23 be molded, mounted or otherwise incorporated on the handle end  
24 of a golf club shaft (not shown) or likewise included in the  
25 grip 12. The grip 12 has a hollow tubular body which tightly  
surrounds the handle of the club and is usually secured in place

1 by adhesive between the grip and handle. The tee retriever 10  
2 is mounted on the butt end of the grip 12 and has a plurality of  
3 resilient and flexible fingers 25 (shown in FIG. 2A), the free  
4 ends of which are spaced-apart from each other a distance which  
5 is less than the diameter of the golf tee 13. The tee 13 is  
6 held in the resilient grasp of the fingers which are forced  
7 apart by the body of the tee. The length of the fingers 25 is  
8 at least equal to the diameter of the largest portion of the  
9 tee. The tee retriever 10 has a base 21 sized and shaped to  
10 approximate the dimensions of the butt end of the grip 12. The  
11 base has a bottom surface 44a (shown in FIG. 4) which contacts  
12 and is fastened to the grip 12. The top side surface of the  
13 base 21 carries the fingers 25.

14 As shown in FIG. 1, the grip 12 and retriever 10, or  
15 flexible fingers 25, may be molded or otherwise formed as an  
16 integral component for the golf club. Also, the retriever may  
17 be included with new grips by placing the base between the ends  
18 of the shafts and the tubular ends of the grips so that the  
19 mounted grips hold the retrievers in place.

20 FIG. 2A shows a tee retriever 23 having a base 21  
21 supporting resilient flexible fingers 25. The free ends of the  
22 fingers carry enlargements 26 shown as spherical, though other  
23 shapes can be used. The enlargements 26 operate to prevent the  
24 tee from escaping from the retriever due to the resilience of  
25 the fingers. The bottom surface of the base 21 has a spike 22  
26 for fastening the retriever to the grip and handle of the golf

1 club. When the spike 22 is driven into the end of the grip and  
2 shaft, it is frictionally held in place. The fingers 25 extend  
3 outwardly parallel to the axis of the shaft and do not interfere  
4 with the normal use of the club.

5 FIG. 2B shows a typical orientation of the fingers within  
6 the periphery of the base 21. As shown, the enlargements 26 are  
7 not in contact with each other, however, such an arrangement is  
8 possible.

9 FIG. 3A shows another embodiment 30 of the retriever in  
10 which the fingers 25 are integrally molded into the butt end of  
11 the grip. The tubular extension of the grip is placed over the  
12 handle of the golf club in the conventional manner. FIG. 3B  
13 shows the retriever as an add-on with the accessory base 32  
14 formed as a tubular extension 35 to fit over the butt end of the  
15 golf club grip and handle.

16 In FIG. 4, the retriever embodiment 40 has a "Velcro"  
17 material affixed to the bottom surface 44a of base 42. A  
18 complimentary strip 44b of "Velcro" is affixed to the butt end  
19 of the grip 12. When the "Velcro" strips are mated, the  
20 retriever 40 is fastened to the grip 12.

21 FIG. 5 shows another retriever embodiment 50 with a  
22 threaded screw 54 extending from the bottom surface 52 of the  
23 base. The use of the threaded screw between the retriever and  
24 the shaft provides a more positive connection.

25 In FIG.s 6-11, various shapes of the fingers are  
26 illustrated. Each of the embodiments have structural elements

1 which frictionally engage the golf tee and retain it until  
2 removed by the golfer. For example, FIG. 6 shows arrow head  
3 fingers 61 that facilitates the capture of a discarded tee by  
4 movement in one direction yet prevents the tee from freely  
5 escaping. This allows the tee to be picked up off the ground  
6 and brought to the up-right position of the golfer.

7 FIG. 7 shows a plurality of cylindrical fingers 71 with  
8 rounded free ends. The cylindrical sides of several fingers  
9 simultaneously grip the length of the tee.

10 FIG. 8 shows conical or pyramidal fingers 81 wherein the  
11 bases of the projections overlap and grasp the tee.

12 FIG. 9 shows another form of columnar fingers 91 with  
13 varying circumferences along the length of each column. The  
14 overlapping enlarged circumferential areas hold the tee.

15 FIG. 10 shows fingers formed as semi-loops 101. The ends  
16 of the semi-loops 101 are attached to the base with the curved  
17 intermediate portions forming the free ends of the fingers. The  
18 semi-loops are closer together than the diameter of a tee.

19 FIG. 11 shows cylindrical fingers with a series of  
20 projections spaced about the entire circumferential surface 111.

21 The retriever may be made of plastics or metals or  
22 combinations thereof which have the requisite properties of  
23 lightness, flexibility and resiliency. They may be made in one  
24 piece or components which are subsequently assembled.

25 It is to be understood that while I have illustrated and  
26 described certain forms of my invention, it is not to be limited